

N58

A HOME IN NICARAGUA!

F 1523
N58
Copy 1

THE

KINNEY EXPEDITION.

Its Character and Purposes,

WITH

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDS PROPOSED TO BE SETTLED,

AND

SUGGESTIONS TO PERSONS DESIROUS OF EMIGRATING.



New York:

W. C. BRYANT & CO., PRINTERS, 41 NASSAU ST., COR. LIBERTY

1855.

An association of gentlemen, under the name and style of the "Nicaraguan Land and Mining Company," has been formed in this city, for the purpose of colonizing certain lands in the State of Nicaragua. The title of these lands is perfect. They are supposed to be the richest in mineral resources of any upon the continent. Their geographical position near the Great Lake of Nicaragua, equi-distant from California and the Atlantic States, and with extraordinary facilities for forwarding to those markets the productions of the soil, together with the salubrity of the climate, the immense agricultural capabilities of the valleys and table lands, the extensive tracts of rich and valuable timber, and the abundance of tropical fruit and game—all of which will be found more particularly alluded to in the subjoined articles,—combine to render this country a very desirable one for immigration and settlement.

The association offers to all persons taking passage for this country within the next three months, for the purpose of becoming actual settlers, from one hundred and sixty to six hundred and forty acres of land, according to location, and a town lot. Those persons going out with the first expedition will have an opportunity of purchasing stock at very favorable rates.

The splendid first-class fast-sailing steamship UNITED STATES has been fitted at great expense to convey Colonel Kinney and his friends to Central America. She will be dispatched in a few days, and it is desirable that all parties who intend to take advantage of this opportunity should secure their tickets at once. The rates of passage are \$80 for after-saloons, \$60 forward saloons and \$40 steerage.

Each person going out should provide himself with an outfit for at least three months. Besides his ordinary clothing he should, if possible, have an India rubber suit, flannel shirts, long miner's boots, etc., and it will be well for each party of five or six persons to take with them a tent with water-proof covering, some domestic, agricultural and mining implements, and the ordinary weapons for sporting and defence required in the exploration and settlement of new countries.

All further information may be had at the office of the agents, Messrs. Pedrajas & Co., 36 Beaver st., where plans of the ship may be seen and tickets secured.

F1523
N58

✓ 26/70

[From the Boston Daily Advertiser, April 25.]

THE KINNEY EXPEDITION.

THE name of Colonel H. L. Kinney has been so much before the public during the last four or five months, in connection with those contradictory stories that the admirable invention of the telegraph serves so well to propagate, that the public may be pardoned if it has become somewhat confused and uncertain with regard to his plans, which nevertheless are of a nature to excite a deep interest among our enterprizing people. Having recently had an opportunity to acquire authentic information by personal interviews with Colonel Kinney and several of his associates, we propose to inform our readers briefly of the nature of the undertaking upon which he is about to embark, as we understand it.

Everybody knows, or ought to know, that "Central America," which is the convenient designation of the country forming the southern extremity of North America,—lying below Mexico and above the Isthmus—consists of five small States, independent Republics, viz., Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. They are not connected by any federation, and are generally not upon the best of terms with each other. The most southerly of these States is Costa Rica; next north of which, and lying chiefly on the western or Pacific side of the continent, but with a sea-coast upon both oceans, is the State of Nicaragua, with which all that we have to say is concerned. Nicaragua has an area of about fifty thousand square miles, which is seven times the extent of our own State of Massachusetts; and upon these fifty thousand miles lives a population of about a quarter of a million, or a fourth part of the population of Massachusetts—so that the population might be increased to thirty times the present number before the State would become as densely settled as Massachusetts, which, in comparison with the old world, is not crowded with inhabitants. There is thus abundant room for new settlers.

The country is rich in agricultural and mineral resources, as appears distinctly by the official statement which we copy in another part of this morning's paper. The climate especially of the highlands, is believed to be pleasant and healthy.

Such is Nicaragua as made by nature; but, from political and social causes, the country has sunk to a low condition, and its trade at present is very inconsiderable. The European settlers have vastly diminished in numbers and degenerated in spirit. Of the 250,000 inhabitants in the country, only 20,000 (less than one-tenth) are pure whites; 15,000 are negroes, 80,000 are Indians, and 130,000, or more than one-half, are of mixed races. The earth no longer yields to the agriculturist and the miner her former ample supplies, because the people are too lazy to give even the labor necessary to secure the return.

Mr. J. W. Fabens, known in this vicinity as a member of Harvard College, of the class of 1842, and known to the country at large as the Commercial Agent of the United States for several years at San Juan, which is the Atlantic seaport of the State of Nicaragua, has obtained, during his residence in the country, by grants from the government and by purchases from individuals, *seven hundred thousand acres* of lands lying upon the slopes of the highlands, adjoining Lake Nicaragua, besides other tracts, measured by square miles elsewhere in the State. His title to this land, as we understand, is perfect and indisputable. Mr. Fabens is associated with Col. Kinney in his enterprize, together with several other gentlemen of acknowledged honor, among whom, we understand, is Fletcher Webster, Esq., of this city.

These gentlemen have formed a company, under the name of the "Nicaragua Land and Mining Company," and propose to settle their own lands with colonists from the United States. The affair is a business enterprize, and is in no sense a political adventure. These gentlemen have no intention of overturning or interfering with the existing government of Nicaragua, nor have they any ambition to make themselves by an armed invasion rulers of a State which has a less white population than many New England towns, and which has a standing debt of half a million dollars, increased at the rate of \$50,000 a year by the annual deficiency in the revenue. Such a scheme would be scarcely worth considering. But they regard the State as affording an opening for honest enterprise, of which they may fairly take advantage, conformably to the laws. They and the colonists who go out under their auspices will rigidly respect the laws of Nicaragua, and those who settle in the country will become Nicaraguans. They will not seek to subvert the institutions of the State, but simply to gather in a fruitful field the harvest which the present population is too idle to sow, much less to reap. They will dispossess nobody; they will

occupy no lands except those acquired by fair purchase or lawful grant; and will injure in no way the happiness or the business of the present inhabitants.

The plans of the company extend to various kinds of business. They expect to get out gold and silver in considerable quantities. We have seen rich specimens of both these precious metals as obtained from the original ore by the rude processes of the natives, which admit of great amplification and improvement. They will carry on sugar, coffee, cocoa, and indigo plantations—raise cattle, and trade in hides—have their own steamboats and other vessels plying upon the lake, and to Atlantic and European ports—and in general, they will engage in any kind of traffic which promises a remunerative return for the capital and labor invested.

Colonel Kinney expects to sail from New York with the first party of settlers, in the steamship United States, on an early day of next month. Four or five hundred men have already engaged their passages. We believe they are promised on their arrival one hundred and sixty acres of lands and a town lot, for each, and are guaranteed employment by the company for the first two or three months at fair wages. Such terms as these cannot fail to command enterprizing men who seek to make their own fortunes by some more rapid rate than the common ways. It is not likely that all their expectations will be realized; but the promise certainly is not without substantial foundation.

It is impossible for the most superficial observer to avoid pursuing in his mind what may be the effect on the future history of the State of Nicaragua, whose rich endowments of nature unhappily have hitherto been so little improved by man, of this influx of a large body of industrious Anglo-Saxon settlers, determined to turn all the resources of the country to good advantage. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that such an addition to the population, by the part which they themselves may legitimately take as Nicaraguans in the conduct of affairs and by the moral influence of their example upon others, will sooner or later exercise a considerable control in shaping the institutions of the republic, and what is more important, the administration of the government under those institutions. It is easy to see in what direction this control is likely to be directed. But we are positively assured that Col. Kinney and his associates entertain no intention nor desire of using force to aid any influence they may acquire in the State, nor will they make any effort to subvert the existing government. Like industrious citizens everywhere, their influence is likely to be a conservative element in maintaining any peaceable and quiet administration; and we are informed that there is good reason to believe that the present rulers of Nicaragua, so far from regarding the approach of the party with jealousy, are pleased with their plans, and will welcome their arrival, and probably aid them in carrying out their designs.

This view is confirmed on the whole by a note from Mr. Marcoleta, the Minister of Nicaragua to the United States, which was published on Saturday last. Mr. Marcoleta does not profess to write under especial instructions from his government, nor does he deny the validity of Mr. Fabens's title to his lands. He professes, however, to entertain apprehensions that the object of the company is "trouble to public order, and, if they can, to overthrow the government in Nicaragua." "Such are" (he says) "my convictions and my belief." "So far from giving my approbation to these projects, I condemn and denounce them, in my official capacity, before the good sense of the American people." If the projects really were such as the Minister says he apprehends, his denunciation would be natural and proper; but we are assured on the word of honorable men that they entertain no such plans; and moreover, as we have said, that the government of Nicaragua is disposed to welcome their coming. It is also obvious that Nicaragua, in its present impoverished state, affords a much more promising field for an honest business enterprise than for a scene of lawless plunder.

Colonel Kinney is a man well qualified to lead in such an enterprise. Physically, he is a perfect man. He has the powers of endurance of an Indian, and all the experience in rough and adventurous life of the soldier and the frontier pioneer. He was one of the earliest inhabitants of what is now the populous and thriving city of Chicago, and took an active part in the settlement of that portion of Illinois. He afterwards migrated to Texas, and led in the settlement of the portion of that State between the Nueces and Rio Grande. He still has a fine seat near Corpus Christi. Although thus comfortably and substantially located, he thirsts for new fields of enterprise, and has turned his attention to Central America. The plans of the "Central American Company" first engaged his attention. This was an organization professing to hold lands by a grant from the Mosquito King. The title was defective, and Colonel Kinney has now no connection with that company. His whole exertions will be in behalf of the "Nicaragua Land and Mining Company," whose lands are held by an unexceptionable title, and whose plans are such as we have been describing.

We need not say that we have no sympathy with "filibusterism" in any of its forms; nor can we assent to the atrocious doctrines first committed officially to paper in the report of the three ministers of the Ostend conference. But the most rigid public moralist can scarcely frown on an enterprise of the character which we are assured belongs to the present "Kinney Expedition."

[From the *National Intelligencer.*.]

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OF NICARAGUA.

In an official document, transmitted to the House of Representatives on the 12th of July, 1850, we find an interesting account of the agricultural resources of Nicaragua, which we give below. In connection with the proposed American colonization of a portion of that country, these statistics will be found valuable.

I have already said that the natural resources of Nicaragua are immense, but they have been very imperfectly developed. The portion of lands brought under cultivation is very small, but ample for the support of its population. There is no difficulty in increasing the amount to an indefinite extent, for the forests are easily removed, and genial nature needs no forcing to return rich harvests. There are many cattle estates, particularly in Chontales, Matagalpa, and Segovia, which cover wide tracts of country, some of these not less than ten or fifteen thousand head of cattle each. The cattle are generally fine, quite equal to those in the United States.

Among the staples of the State, and which are produced in great perfection, I may mention sugar, cotton, coffee, cocoa, indigo, tobacco, rice, and maze or Indian corn.

Sugar.—The description of sugar-cane used in Nicaragua, is a native of the country, and very different from the Asiatic cane cultivated in the West Indies and the United States; it is said to be equally productive with the foreign species; the canes are slenderer and softer, and contain more and stronger juice, in proportion to their size, than the Asiatic variety. Two crops are taken annually, and the cane does not require replanting but once in twelve or fourteen years. The best kind of sugar produced from the sugar estates is nearly as white as the refined sugar of commerce, the crystals being large and hard. A large part of the supply for ordinary consumption is what is called "chancaca," and is the juice of the cane merely boiled till it crystallizes, without being cleaned of the molasses. A quantity of this is exported to Peru, and elsewhere in South America. It is stated that the "chancaca" may be produced ready for sale at \$1 25 per quintal, (101½ lbs. English.) The most profitable part of the sugar establishment is the manufacture of "aguas ardientes," a species of rum. It is impossible to say, in the absence of data, what is the amount of manufacture of sugar at Nicaragua; it is perhaps enough to know that it may be produced indefinitely.

The export has been estimated at 200,000 lbs.

Cotton.—Cotton of a superior quality to that of Brazil may be produced in any quantity in Nicaragua. "As many as 50,000 bales, of 300 pounds each," says Dunlap, "of clean and pressed cotton have been exported from this State in a single year; the cultivation is, however, at present (1846) at a very low ebb." Considerable quantities are nevertheless raised, which are manufactured by the natives, but chiefly by the Indians into hammocks, sail cloth, and ordinary clothing. The domestic cloth is coarse, but compact, neat and durable.

Coffee.—Coffee of a superior quality, and probably equal to any in the world, may be produced indefinitely in this Republic; but for some reasons it is not very extensively cultivated. The plantations which I have seen are very flourishing, and the proprietors find them quite as profitable as any other. The limited cultivation is perhaps due to the circumstance that chocolate is the common beverage of the people, and coffee, never having become an article of trade or export, has consequently been neglected. There is no reason why as good coffee should not be produced here as in Costa Rica; and the Costa Rica coffee, when offered in good condition in England, commands a higher price than any other. As, however, it is usually shipped by way of Cape Horn, it often suffers from the protracted voyage. It has, nevertheless, been the almost exclusive source of wealth in Costa Rica. The crop of 1847 amounted to 8,000,000 pounds, which, at \$12 50 per cwt. (the average price in the English market,) gives \$1,000,000 as the returns—a considerable sum for a State of less than 100,000 inhabitants, and where the culture has been introduced but fourteen years. The cost of production per quintal (101½ pounds) at the present rate of wages (25 cents per day) is about \$2 50. If the attention of the people of Nicaragua was seriously directed to the production of coffee, it would prove a great profit.

Cocoa.—Cocoa, only equalled by that of Soconosco, on the coast of Guatemala, (and which was once monopolized for the use of the royal establishment of Spain,) is cultivated in considerable quantities. It is, however, an article of general consumption among the inhabitants; and, consequently, commands so high a price that it would not bear exportation, even though it could be obtained in requisite quantities. About all that finds its way abroad goes in the form of presents from one friend to the other. There is no reason why this should not become an article of large trade, and a source of great wealth. There

is one cause why its production is not greater, and that is the length of time and great outlay required in getting a cocoa plantation in paying operation. Few have now the requisite capital to invest; and these few are in too feverish a state, in consequence of the distracted condition of public affairs, to venture upon any investment. Under a stable condition of things, and by the opening of a short and easy channel to market, the cultivation of cacao will rise to be of the first importance. The trees give two principal crops in the year. It is sold for \$15 to \$20 the quintal, while the Guayaquil is worth but \$5 or \$6.

Indigo.—Indigo was formerly cultivated to a considerable extent, but has, of late years, much fallen off; and there are a number of fine indigo estates in various parts of the republic which have been quite given up, with all their appurtenances, by their respective proprietors. The plant cultivated for the manufacture of indigo is the indigo-fera, a triennial plant, supposed to be a native of America. There is also an indigenous triennial plant abounding in many parts of Central America, which produces indigo of a very excellent quality, but gives less than half the weight which is produced by the cultivated species. The indigo of Nicaragua is of a very superior quality, and its export once came up to 4000 bales of 150 pounds each. It is impossible to say what the export is at present; probably not more than 1000 or 2000 bales. Under the government of Spain, the State of San Salvador produced from 8,000 to 10,000 bales annually. A piece of ground equal to two acres generally produces about 100 or 120 pounds, at a cost of not far from thirty to forty dollars, including clearing of the field, and all other expenses.

Tobacco.—A large amount of tobacco is used in Nicaragua, all of which is produced in the country.

A considerable quantity was, this year, shipped to California. It may be cultivated to any desirable extent, and of a very superior quality. That of San Salvador is said to be equal to the best Havana for cigars.

Maize flourishes luxuriantly, and three crops may be raised on the same ground annually. It is essentially the "staff of life" in all Central America, being the material of which the eternal totilla is composed. The green stalks, "sacate," constitute about the only fodder for horses and cattle in the country, and is supplied daily in all the principal towns. The abundance of this grain may be inferred from the fact that a Fanega of Leon (equivalent to about five bushels of English,) of shelled corn commands in the capital but 75 cents.

Wheat, and all other cereal grains, as well as the fruits of temperate climates, flourish in the elevated districts of Segovia, in the northern part of the republic bordering upon Honduras; here, it is said, except in the absence of snow, little difference is to be observed, in respect to climate, from the central parts of the United States.

Rice is abundant in Nicaragua, is extensively used, and, like maize, may be easily cultivated to any extent desirable. It sold from \$1.50 to \$2 per ewt.

In short, all the edibles and fruits of the tropics are produced naturally, or may be cultivated in great perfection. Plantains, bananas, beans, chile, tomatoes, bread fruit, arrow-root, okro, citrons, oranges, limes, lemons, pine apples, (the delicious white Guayaquil) as well as the yellow variety, manays, anonas, guavas, cocoanuts, and a hundred other varieties of plants and fruits. Among the vegetable productions of commerce may be mentioned sarsaparilla, anots, aloes, ipecacuanha, ginger, vanilla, Peruvian bark (quinine), coubage, copal, gum arabic, capevi, caoutchouc, dragon's blood, and vanglo or oil plant. Among valuable trees, mahogany, logwood, Brazil-wood, lignumvitae, fustic, yellow sanders, pine, (on the heights,) dragon's blood tree, silk cotton tree, oak copal tree, cedar, button wood, iron wood, rose wood, Nicaragua wood, calebask, &c., &c. "Of these," says Dunlap, "Brazil wood, cedar, and mahogany, are found in the forests in what may be termed inexhaustible quantities." The cedar is a large tree like the red cedar of the north in nothing except color and durability, and in solidity and other respects closely resembling the black walnut. Five or six cargoes of Brazil wood are exported from Realejo yearly, and something more from San Juan. A quantity of cedar plank is also exported to South America.

The raising of cattle and the production of cheese is a most important item in the actual resources of Nicaragua.

The cheese is for common consumption, and great quantities are used. Large droves of cattle are annually sent to the other states, where they command very fair prices. About thirty-five or forty thousand hides are also exported annually.

MINERAL RESOURCES. —

The mineral resources of Nicaragua are also immense: gold, silver, copper, lead and iron may be found in considerable quantities in various parts, but more particularly in Segovia, which district is probably not exceeded in its mineral wealth by any equal portion of the continent. The working of the mines has, of course, vastly fallen off from the time of the Spaniards; still their produce is considerable, but it is impossible to obtain any satisfactory statistics concerning it. A portion of the gold and silver finds its way through Isabel to the Belize; other portions pass out through the ports of Truxillo and Omoa, in

Honduras; and another but smaller part reaches the ports of Nicaragua. There is no mint in Central America, excepting a small one in Costa Rica, which coins from \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually, principally in dollar pieces of gold. These are short of weight, and are not generally current. Their true value is ninety-three cents. Humboldt, in his statement of the produce of the respective mining districts of America, has put against that of Guatemala "nothing;" but it is certain, from the accounts of Gage and others, as also of the buccaneers, who made a number of profitable expeditions to the mining districts, that the precious metals were early produced in considerable abundance. From a report by the master of the gold mint, made in 1825, it appears that for fifteen years anterior to 1810, gold and silver had been coined to the amount of \$2,193,832, and for the fifteen years posterior to that date to the amount of \$3,810,382. This officer remarks, "that it must not be deducted from hence that this is all our mines have produced in this period, as great quantities of the metal have been manufactured and exported in their native state." He estimates the actual products of the mines at ten times the amount coined; which would give upwards of \$50,000,000 for the thirty years preceding 1825. This estimate will probably bear some deduction.

Other minerals are abundant. Sulphur may be obtained in great quantities, crude and nearly pure, from the volcanoes; and nitre is easily procured, as also sulphate of iron.

Coal, as elsewhere stated, is said to occur in large beds and of good quality, in the State of San Salvador, near the boundaries of Honduras, and only twenty miles back from the coast of the gulf of Fonseca.

From the New York Evening Post, April 27.

COL. KINNEY'S EXPEDITION—WHERE IT IS GOING AND WHAT IT WILL DO.

The steamship United States has been chartered to sail in May next with a party of perhaps five hundred colonists, under the guidance of Col. Kinney, to the port of San Juan. After a passage probably of about eight days, and a voyage of forty-eight hours ride up the river San Juan, the adventurers will find themselves among the luxuriant forests and grassy plains which bound the northeastern shores of Lake Nicaragua.

According to the statements which we derive from Mr. Fabens, the United States Consul at San Juan, the "Nicaragua Land and Mining Company" have a valid title to nearly a million acres of land, principally in the mountainous district of Chontales, bordering on the large and beautiful lake of Nicaragua. Some of these lands have been purchased from the government and the church of Nicaragua, both of which, by reason of the incessant wars to which they are parties, frequently feel the want of ready money, and are consequently willing to sell their possessions cheap. The title to others rests in certain wealthy land-owners connected with the company, who are desirous of inviting settlers to their vicinity. Within the domains of the company is the fine island known as St. George's Key, at the mouth of Great River, where the most extensive mahogany tracts, and where the sarsaparilla, the India rubber, and the elbo, from the fruit of which a valuable oil is extracted, are found in great abundance.

Among the valuable woods in the main land district of Chontales are mahogany, rose-wood, satin wood, black cedar, Brazilletto, and the costly dye-wood known in commerce as the Lima or Nicaragua wood. In some localities the ceiba or wild cotton tree flourishes, growing in a few years to such a size that a dozen men can hardly embrace it with their arms. Three crops of corn are easily obtained yearly, and tropical fruits of all sorts exist in profusion. Chontales is famous as a grazing country, having the best pasture lands in Central America. The traveller never loses sight of herds of cattle, with troops of wild deer frolicking on their skirts. Other game, such as wild turkey, quail and woodcock, are also plentiful, and the mountain streams furnish trout of a delicate flavor.

Besides these, there exist mines of gold, silver, coal and other minerals, of which promising specimens have been exhibited in this city. When these sources of wealth are once fairly opened and developed, we may look forward to another California in this now neglected and thinly peopled region.

The climate of Chontales, we are told, is delightful, the temperature on the mountains being cool and invigorating, while upon the plains, where the thermometer ranges from 64 to 78 degrees, owing to the refreshing breezes from the great lake of Nicaragua, it is never oppressively hot. Such is the testimony of Squier, who says of Nicaragua that "its

clamate is so favorably modified by a variety of causes as to be rendered not only agreeable, but quite as salubrious as that of any equal extent of country under the tropics."

That such a country affords a desirable field for energetic and thrifty colonists, cannot be doubted; and it was with the view of attracting such men that the late President Chomorro, shortly before his death, sent a letter by Mr. Fabens offering inducements to Americans to emigrate to Nicaragua, and engage in the cultivation of coffee, by the diligent attention to which the neighboring State of Costa Rica (Rich Coast,) so-called originally in derision for its poverty, had in ten years become well-entitled to its name. A similar attention to the development of its resources, with a similar exemption from civil commotions, might be attended with like results in Nicaragua.

We should be glad to hope that Col. Kinney's expedition may co-operate in this work of regenerating Nicaragua. To many minds it will derive a certain interest from the peculiar antecedents of its leader, its possible results upon the destiny of our own government, and from the fact that it is the first attempt at colonizing the interior of Central America made by representatives of the Anglo-Saxon stock.

More than three centuries ago, another expedition was made by men of a different race, which gave a distinctive character to the institutions and the subsequent history of this portion of the continent. Cortez, having established the Spanish dominion in Mexico, had heard of nations further south still unsubdued, and in a letter to his master, Charles the Fifth, he wrote as follows:—

"I have received information as well of the great riches of that country, as that in the opinion of navigators there exists a strait leading from that bay, (probably the bay of Honduras) into the opposite sea, which is the thing above all others in this world I am desirous of meeting with, on account of the immense utility which I am convinced would result from it, to the advantage of your Imperial Majesty."

The officer selected by Cortez to effect his purpose, was Don Pedro de Alvarado, whose exploits in traversing an unknown country, in fighting the forces of rebellious chiefs, amounting, in one battle, to 232,000 warriors, and in making settlements, are described with some minuteness by the Spanish chroniclers.

The first site upon which his cavaliers fixed their longing eyes for a permanent habitation was the old city of Guatimala, a magnificent valley elevated five or six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and lying between two lofty volcanoes; with a mild and equable climate, abounding streams, a vegetation so luxurious and unfading, and with such a prodigal opulence of beauty, that they lost all desire of returning to their native land or of advancing to further conquests. No wonder that, tired of long and sanguinary wars, and under the exhilaration of that delightful air, they should forget the sleeping dangers of the vicinity, and found a city on the banks of the Rio Pensativo.

What has followed this invasion is well known. The disappearance or degeneracy of the aboriginal races, political misrule and anarchy, and social and moral decline, while the material resources of the country have remained almost as entirely undeveloped as at the time when its tropical beauty called forth the admiration of the ambitious cavaliers of Alvarado or Machuca. We trust the people of Central America have reasons for anticipating better results from the enterprize of Col. Kinney.

CHONTALES—THE DISTRICT FOR THE PROPOSED KINNEY SETTLEMENT.

The following letter from a citizen of the United States, who has resided for many years in Central America, appeared in the *New York Herald* of September 2d, 1854:

LIBERTAD, Nicaragua, July 7, 1854.

Description of the Department of Chontales—Incidents of the Trip from Greytown—The City of Libertad—The Mines, &c.

You have heard of the department of Chontales, in Nicaragua. It is a portion of the republic where there is about the average chance for improvement. Until within some eight or ten months, it has been known only as a land of grass—a territory where the Indians and half-breeds pasture their countless herds. The bungo men coming down to San Juan del Norte often brought deer skins, and sometimes live specimens of natural history—ant-eaters, armadillos, sloths, &c.—which they accounted for as having been taken in Chontales. We knew, too, that it was a mountainous region, watered by many streams, and possessing a fine, bracing, healthy climate. In that lotus-eating land of grizzly Greytown, where

All around the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

we oft resolved to visit this fresh, untravelled region. Imagination pictured its broad savannahs, its majestic forests, its towering hills, its sequestered Indian villages, its roaming flocks, its fruits and game. We had sometimes charming visions of a sealing of our own, far up on some mountain side, where we could go to sleep at night with the mountain breeze blowing freshly over us, and the plaintive notes of the whip-poor-will, or distant braying of the jaguars, lulling us off to tranquil dreams, and then to awake in the morning, and up with a hearty spring, and find ourselves, like the Nicaragua Transit line to California, ahead of the mails—we mean the sun—looking out over a stormy prospect of crags and hills to the silent, sleeping lake beyond, with Omtepec standing solemnly in its midst, like an eternal sentinel, overlooking all the land. Now into the saddle, lasso in hand, and so forth.

Last fall we got a letter from your old correspondent, "Ranchero," telling us of the discovery of rich gold mines in this same district. This decided the case; so some two months since, the dry season being fairly set in, we brushed up an old poncho, invested seven dollars in a pair of long boots, (all men going to the mines buy a pair of long boots,) unslung our hammocks—meaning always, in this use of the plural, the writer and his inseparable friend, L—, and took passage on board the steamer *Charles Morgan*, for Castillo Rapids. We had a fine opportunity to survey the river, for we were three days in getting to Castillo, which is distant from San Juan ninety miles. It must, however, be borne in mind that the river was then very low, and having a large quantity of freight on board, we made several stoppages, and, in fact, exchanged boats three times. At this point we took a bungo and were five days in getting to our final landing place at Muyalles, about eighty or ninety miles further, on the eastern shore of Lake Nicaragua. We stopped, however, frequently: the brave mariners tying up altogether at night, and going on shore to cook and eat twice a day, which performance occupied from two to three hours each time. On one occasion we laid over for a day and a half, in a sequestered bay on the lake shore. The mariners ate, slept and reposed generally, while the writer and his friend wandered off in quest of adventures, and coming suddenly upon the hacienda of a venerable native, were treated with great politeness, and invited to take wine and brandy, neither of which articles, on the writer's acceptance of the invitation, could be produced.

At Muyalles we engaged mules to take us to the mines—two to ride upon, one for our guide, and one for our luggage—for which we paid four dollars a head, and one dollar for the guide. This Muyalles is a cattle hacienda, belonging to Señor Ferrer. It is delightfully situated on the shore of the lake; a broad, beautiful stream runs through it, taking its rise in the mountains, some forty miles back. The thatched cot of the herdsman is built upon the bank of this stream, about a mile and a half from its mouth. The ground here is level, shaded by broad sycamore and acacias, and covered with a rich crop of grass, affording excellent pasture to cattle during the dry season. At the time of our arrival, which was at about the hour of seven o'clock, A. M., there were several hundred cows in an enclosure hard by, and the milkers were going to and fro with their native buckets hollowed out of a log, pouring the milk into long troughs cut likewise out of the trunks of trees. In the next enclosure were the bleating calves, protesting vehemently against the operation. We drank about a gallon of milk, for which the herdsman who settled with us considered five cents ample remuneration, and we swung off after our guide through the forest. There was but little undergrowth, and we trotted briskly along while the shade lasted. Delicate footed deer tripped past through the long vistas in the wood, and matronly cows stepped quietly out of our path. We saw a troop of peccaries or wild hogs steering for the river—saucy-looking chinchillas and ant-eaters skipped along the trunks of fallen trees, stopping occasionally to take a fair look at L— and myself. Over head wild turkeys, parrots and macaws chattered and screamed; monkeys, in groups of half a dozen or more, navigated in the same airy regions, pitching in among the birds, as it seemed out of pure deviltry, and at long intervals we came upon a sloth hanging to the trunk of a tree by one leg, which we could hardly tell from the hanging nest of the yellow tailed oriole so common to this country.

But this charming kind of travel ceased when we reached the open plain. On emerging from the timber land, which reminded one, except for the foreign animals and birds, of park scenery in the old world, we came upon a burned savannah, with a species of stunted tree growing here and there, about the size and shape of the crab apple of the north, and almost destitute of foliage. The heat which reflected upon us from the naked earth made us believe that beneath the ground we trod was really a sheet of smouldering fire, which occasionally sent up its spheres of flame through the craters of the volcanoes about us. We hurried over this heated district in the direction of the mountains, and after about two hours' travel reached the hacienda of Hato Grande, which, like Muyalles, is a cattle estate, and the property of Señor Ferrer.

We have given this description of our journey thitherward because it is by all odds the best road to take. The bungo-men will try to get rid of you at San Ubaldo, about fifteen miles further down the lake, and consequently that much less distance for them to

carry you and your luggage. But if you shouldn't get drowned in the surf landing at that point, you will find no accommodation there, either to remain or proceed, and an awful road to travel when you do get started. But this way it is all plain sailing. A good landing place at Muyalles, a fine level road to Hato Grande, thence 12 miles to the Indian village of Juigalpa, thence 26 miles to this place, Libertad or Liberty city as the Americans term it. At Hato Grande and Juigalpa the traveller can find entertainment for man and beast, and every few miles along the road between these stopping places are Indian ranches, where he can obtain milk, tortillas, a yard or two of beef, and if he be good looking or have a box or two of remedies, *i. e.* Brandreth's or bread pills, he may be invited to a lounge in a hammock made of untanned hide and treated to a drink of chocolate and pounded corn, by a draggled tailed Indian girl, whose appearance will bring to mind the expression of the nursery heroine who went into the garden to eat a cabbage leaf—“What, no soap!”

Do not think the road is all over such a heated surface as we last spoke of. After leaving Hato Grande you get into the high country. The air here is cool and invigorating. I remember well the night before we arrived at Libertad. How cold it was! We had got within ten miles of the town when we came upon a ranche on a fine table land in the mountain of Cosmatio. Our party had increased as we approached the mines, and there were now some twelve of us. When we got off from our horses and mules, and felt the onslaught of the mountain wind, it chilled us like a blast of winter. We took a drink of agua ardiente all around, and wrapped ourselves in great coats and blankets and turned in. It was no use. There were two old Californians with us, who had come across the country from Realejo. They collected wood and we built a great fire, and sat half the night crouching around it in our shawls and blankets, talking cosily of distant places and other days.

When you arrive here you have reached your journey's end. Immediately beyond tower the mountain ranges of Tiger and San Juan, rich in gold and silver beyond comparison, but their sides are covered with thick woods, so that the mule threads his way along with difficulty. But our site is on a broad rolling plain, covered with tempting pasturage, and dotted with native ranches—just such a plain as Abraham and Lot would have coveted, when, very rich in cattle, in silver and gold, they journeyed towards the South.

Six months ago there was but one house in sight from the point where I now sit, a native Indian ranche. Now I can count over fifty, and sites are already selected for the erection of nearly as many more. Six months since the solitary Indian roamed through these grassy vales in search of stray cattle, or threaded the infrequent paths upon the mountain sides, tracking the wild bee, and stopping occasionally to pick from the beds of the streamlets a few specks of gold. Now, an active, resident population of some four to five hundred individuals gives life and character to the scene. Here are all grades, conditions and colors. I write this from the hotel of Don Ramon, situate on the hill as you approach the town from the lake shore. It is an adobe building, some fifteen by forty feet, one story high, and contains four rooms. On the same elevation are two other houses already erected and two more in the process of erection. In the vale below, near the base of the Tiger Mountain, and about a quarter of a mile distant from Don Ramon's, is the main portion of the town. Here are stores, dwelling houses, tipple stands, and gaming saloons. Miners tramp to and fro over the green; rancheros from other parts are in with mules for sale; native women, with water jars or piles of clothing on their heads, go periodically to and from the water courses, with the step of an Arab barb; little groups are around the doors of the liquor shops, and other groups are in the aforesaid gaming saloons. There is great talk upon mineralogical subjects, and there is some talk about manifest destiny, and the extension of freedom's area, likewise. It is a town such as has often sprung into existence before in many a western territory, and in our far west State. It differs from all other towns in Nicaragua, in that it has a new and bustling look. There is not much regularity in its arrangement; it looks sprawling like an infant in its cradle, and that's just what it is.

The mining business is yet mostly confined to the crushing and amalgamating process; but within a few weeks the native Indians are bringing in large quantities of washed gold, which they find in the mountain streams. By the mining laws of Nicaragua, a foreigner can only obtain possession and the privilege of working mines by associating himself with a citizen of that State. There are many Americans here, notwithstanding. Mr. Fabens, the American Consul at San Juan del Norte, owns four mines in connection with Senor Ferre. These are all very rich. These gentlemen have likewise a valuable coal mine near the shores of the lake. Messrs. Mills and Fannin, two American gentlemen, have also some valuable mines here, owned in connection with Padre Sexta Sosa one of those generous hearted priests whom Stevens so delighted to eulogize. There are many other Americans who have interests in mines, or who receive ore to crush and wash out upon shares. This is now done by hand. As soon as machinery is introduced, and the country properly prospected for placer diggings, I believe it will be found to be second in opulence only to California.

THE NATURAL RICHES OF CHONTALES.

The following letter, which is translated from the New York *Staats Zeitung* of May 7, 1855, was written by a young German, who has lately explored the district of the proposed settlement, with the design of ascertaining its resources and capabilities:

VIRGIN BAY, NICARAGUA, April 20, 1855.

Myself and friends, who had taken passage on board the steamer *Northern Light*, left New York March 27, and arrived on the 5th of April, in the port of San Juan del Norte, after a very pleasant trip. We were transferred from our steamer at Punta Arenas on board a smaller river steamer, to go up the San Juan river as far as Fort San Carlos. The water being at this time of the year pretty low, we were compelled, partly from that reason, and partly to pass around the so-called rapids, to shift frequently, and unpleasant as this transhipment was, it proved to me of some advantage, and afforded a good opportunity to see more of the banks of said river than I otherwise would have had. We walked short distances and stopped on sundry places along the river to take some refreshments, and to converse with the people, who lived apparently in great comfort upon their small haciendas or farms. On enquiry I ascertained, and I was convinced by my own investigations, that the country along the river San Juan was very fertile and abounded in all kind of rich growing timber, mahogany, cedar, logwood, rosewood, palm trees, cocoas and other tropical shrubberies and valuable cabinet wood. The soil seemed to be exceedingly rich, and produced without almost any labor, two harvests and sometimes three of Indian corn and fruits, plantains, &c. The many beautiful flowers and plants, orange trees with their rich, dark green foliage, interwoven with vines and flowers, gave us a magnificently picturesque view, almost too beautiful to describe.

It was with reluctance I embarked for Central America on account of the many unfavorable reports put in circulation about the climate, wild beasts, reptiles and the aversion of the inhabitants towards foreign immigration. But how agreeably was I disappointed: instead of a hot, feverish atmosphere, I found the air to be very salubrious, and the heat not greater than in May or June in New York. As for wild beasts, I have seen none; and as for the people that live here, why if every body is like my landlord, a Spaniard or Creole, I could not find a better and kinder set of men all over the world. They like Germans exceedingly well, and are anxious that their beautiful country should be settled by a better race than the present mixed population of blacks, Indians, mulattoes, &c, I am employed as house-carpenter by a gentleman, who is connected with the Transit Company, to build barns and out-houses, and when I tell you, that I am able to work, even here, near the Pacific Ocean, between lake Nicaragua and San Juan del Sur from morning 6 o'clock till evening at 6 o'clock, why the climate cannot be unhealthy. I receive fifty dollars wages per month, boarding and lodging free. This, I think, is rather better than people have to expect in the United States at present, and my fare is not like the fare in New York, but it is plenty of everything. Chocolate, tortillas, trigoles and sweetmeats for breakfast; soup, roasted or boiled meat, and chocolate, cakes and fruits for dinner; and eggs, chocolate, cakes, etc., for tea. This is certainly enough, and more than we get in the United States for our meals in boarding houses.

Through the kindness of my employer, and those with whom he is associated, I have received all kind of information concerning the proposed settlement in Nicaragua. It is the opinion of every intelligent and well informed man here that, rich as this country is in everything, its resources will never be developed by the present inhabitants; and it is to an emigration from the United States and Europe they look for the improvement of their country.

If we take into consideration the richness of the soil, a forest full of all kinds of valuable cabinet woods, dye woods and medical plants, not to mention the hidden treasures of the mineral kingdom, and the little labor that is required to use all these to the advantage of a practical farmer, why, it is almost impossible to believe that this portion of Central America has not drawn already a large immigration and speculating men to amass wealth.

Amongst other tropical fruits which grow here without any cultivation, I could say wild, there is sugar, coffee, cacao, rice, tobacco, plantains, bananas, pine-apples, sweet potatoes, Indian corn, and all kinds of vegetables for use in the house and kitchen. As I have already stated, Indian corn yields from two to three crops per year, and this, in connection with a plantain patch, is sufficient to produce almost everything for a family.

With about a hundred dollars expenses, you can start a plantain field of about eight hundred plants, which will last for at least seventy years without being replanted. Pigs, chickens and other domestic animals are in abundance.

You are aware of the fact that we have here no winter, but only a so-called rainy season; consequently all labor that is required in the north of the United States to lay in stores for man and beast for the winter is unnecessary. Consequently it requires but little capital to begin with: but should a man have some cash, to employ the natives either for raising coffee, cacao or sugar cane, it would be so much the better, and in five years he would be a rich, independent man.

As there are, at present, no proper accommodations for families, at least not in the country, it would be advisable to send out only young men, either mechanics or farmers or such as are willing to use the axe and the hoe; masons, carpenters, housebuilders, brick-layers, smiths, and such as understand mining, are welcome. I would not advise them to bring right away their wives and children along, although a few women for washing and house-keeping would not be amiss. But let these pioneers come out single, clear the country, cultivate the ground, build houses, and then send for their families; and let them bring some arms, say rifles, guns, etc., for hunting and defence.

Some large tracts of lands are most beautifully adapted for raising live stock, others again for agricultural and mining purposes: amongst the latter, I will only mention the gold and silver mines of *Chontales*, which are represented to be very rich.

I think it will be a good speculation to cut mahogany and other cabinet wood, for which there is a ready market in Europe.

In my opinion, the country between the Atlantic ocean, along the river San Juan and the lake Nicaragua is better adapted for agricultural purposes than the small isthmus between the lake and the Pacific ocean. For there, near the Atlantic side, everything was green and had a cheerful look, while here it is barren and dry; but that may be different at other seasons. However, the eastern slope has the advantage of better water communication with the Atlantic ocean, and, as such, is preferable to a settlement on the western coast.

This much I know, there is a chance for making money, and I invite everybody to try, like myself, his fortune, and he will find it to his advantage. I am anxiously waiting to hear from you, that your friends, with the new colonists, have started, as I would like to join them again; I feel rather lonesome, because I cannot speak Spanish. I trust to bear soon agreeable news from you, and shall give you, from time to time, information about this country.

Your affectionate Nephew,
W. SCHULZ.

To G. E. SCHULZ,
Corner Reade and West streets, New York City.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 817 066 8